

VILLAGE OF BARRINGTON HILLS

Minutes of the Special Meeting May 16, 2007

President Abboud called the Special Meeting to consider American Tower's special use permit application for a cell tower at 254 Bateman Rd. to order at 7:42 pm. Roll Call.

Present

Robert G. Abboud, President
Fritz H. Gohl, Pro-Tem
Beth Mallen, Trustee
Steven E. Knoop, Trustee
George L. Schueppert, Trustee
Julie McKevitt, Trustee
Douglas Wambach, Village Attorney
Elaine M. Ramesh, Village Clerk

Guests

Meryl and Richard Cannon, residents
B. and Gloria Johnson, residents
David Kunker, Lisle
Nancy Masterson, resident
Mark Pepler, Itasca
Beatrice Duffy, resident
P. Denise Israel, resident
Robert and Nina Stephenson, residents
Harold Borgmann, resident
Jan Goss, resident
Patricia Abboud, resident
Tony Solano
Don Arndtsen
Tara and Karen Duffy, residents
Karen and John Rosene, residents
Jonathan Knight, resident
Elizabeth and Marty Robins, residents
Alison, Joan and Dan Wolfgram, residents
Matt and Holly Yeterian, residents
Alan and Hollie Free, residents

Linda and Craig Hanson, residents
Janice Gohl, resident
Peter Wessel, resident
Jean Maddrell, resident
Richard Lamkey, resident
Anne Dunseith, resident
Serg and Connie Uccetta, residents
Joe Buchel, resident
Steve Erdman, resident
Rich Judd
Arnold Cernik, resident
Barbara Schmidt, resident
Wendy Fern, resident
Dan Jufferbruch, resident
Mike and Kathy Zachar, residents
John Parker, resident
Jane Buche, resident
Carolyn Springer, resident
Lois Harrbold
Greg Schafer

Ginger and Jessica Underwood, residents
Bill and Muffy Hostetler, residents
Barry and Cathy LeCompte, residents
Lola and Lawrence Coles, residents
Mimi Burke, resident
Muffy Cooke, resident
Adrian Lopez
Sharon Wilson
Marilyn Heaton, resident
Patrick McKevitt, resident
Kevin Colosia, resident
Michael Hill, resident

Jim Drury, resident
Reider Frederixon, resident
David Elke
William Springer, resident
Jim Hammond, resident
C.J. Lancaster, resident
Linda Fox, resident
Stacey Lidbury, resident
Rick Vines, resident
Amy Hoffmann, resident
Tammy Brewer, resident
John Jackobse, ATC

President Abboud made opening remarks about the order of the meeting. He indicated that there may be a series of meetings prior to the Village Board's vote on American Tower's special use permit application, if warranted. The Board will entertain public comments, and then will discuss the matter after the public comments section has closed, in the presence of the audience. Every attempt will be made to make sure everyone is heard.

He explained the roles of the ZBA and the Village with respect to the permit application process, and the history of the permit to date. President Abboud assured the public that he would be objective in making his decision. He also clarified that Kevin Colosia, Chairman of the Technology Committee, was employed by his company two years ago, but that he is not presently an employee. Moreover, he reiterated that his company isn't in the cellular telecommunications business.

Trustee Gohl spoke next. He indicated that the viewpoint of each of the residents was important to the Board, and requested that the audience have respect for every opinion.

Trustee Knoop spoke as Board liaison to the Planning Commission. He made a disclaimer that he had just obtained a horse which will be stabled at Oakwood Farms.

Trustee Schueppert indicated that as Board liaison to the ZBA, he has attended all six ZBA meetings related to this matter. Furthermore, he doesn't own a horse.

Trustee Mallen, as Communications Committee Chair, was very involved in all the meetings leading up to tonight. She stated that that the whole Board has the best interests of Barrington Hills at heart.

ZBA Chairman Knight made a short presentation on the summary of the American Tower petition. He was followed by Kevin Colosia, who described what American Tower was applying to install. During the presentation, many questions were asked by the audience about the viability of alternatives to the cell tower, and potential liabilities of cell towers, among other remarks. The public was assured that all of the issues brought up had been addressed already by the ZBA during their series of six hearings. The public was invited to examine the detailed record of those meetings which is available at the Village Hall.

At 9:05 pm the public comments session began. Some highlights from each speaker's comments follow.

Meryl Cannon: She is the owner of Horizon Farms; and is opposed to the cell tower construction which she believes will lower property values. She also believes that there are other options to cell towers since technology is improving daily. She said that the Village should explore other options without sacrificing our horizons, no pun intended. She said that the residents want a rural community; and that the residents want the rural nature of the Village preserved, not urban development and urban sprawl.

Richard Cannon: He recognized that the residents have divergent attitudes on the issue, while agreeing that everyone wants good cell coverage. He would like to have further exploration of alternatives to cell towers for improving communications, and volunteered to be a member of the Technology Committee.

Beatrice Duffy: A fifty year resident, she stated that she was saddened by the haste of those who seek to change the quality of our Village. She indicated that her cell coverage is good. She proposed that if adequate alternative technologies such as satellite technology are not yet available, that the Village should wait until they are. She also stated that she was concerned about liability if a balloon, plane or helicopter were to collide with the tower.

P. Denise Israel: She submitted a petition signed by 564 residents and 94 non-residents in favor of a cell tower. She provided examples of situations that good cell phone coverage was necessary in the Village: for home nurses, in the event of an equine-related accident, and in the event that land lines are downed. After her presentation, the LeCompte's attorney protested that the Board couldn't consider the Israel petition in its deliberations.

Robert Stephenson: He indicated that those who travel to and through the Village should be protected; and that the consideration of the special use permit for a cell tower is a health, welfare and safety issue which affects residents, service providers, joggers, bicyclists and homes. He also said that the Board is on notice that there is a deficiency and Board is duty-bound to act.

Butch Borgmann: He said that it may be advisable to wait a few years to address the communications problems since technology will advance; rather than ruining the countryside.

Jan Goss: He stated that he doesn't understand the fear of others about this project. He indicated that his calls are dropped all the time and that he doesn't get good cell reception at his home. He said that the request had to be reviewed rationally in light of whether the need for the service is great enough to put up with the eyesore.

Patricia Abboud: She began her comments by saying that she was speaking only for herself. She is unable to get cell service in her house and said that the health and safety of residents should be a concern. She knows of someone who fell off a horse and was unable to call for help because of lack of cell service.

Tara Duffy: She said that Barrington Hills is 30 glorious square miles; and an island in the midst of a sea of suburban sprawl. She requested that the Board take its time in making this decision. She skis cross-country in the Forest Preserve and does not have a problem with her cell service.

Karen Duffy: She says that she has no trouble with cell phone service, and worries about liability created by the cell tower which may be transferred to the residents. She asked the Village to proceed slowly and also asked if perhaps another survey could be done to assess the need.

Matt Yeterian: He made the point that since adequate cell service in town would actually require a series of towers, all the towers should be considered at once, so that the overall impact of the project to improve telecommunications on the Village can be assessed. Additionally, he pointed out that if a resident can erect a cell tower on their property; that person reaps a financial benefit at the expense of the neighbors, whose properties may be devalued. He requested that the Board do their duty to the residents and vote no on this issue.

Holly Free: She noted that in the Quintessential Barrington magazine, President Abboud was quoted as saying that the "landscape is not to be taken for granted". She felt that the quote could be applicable to the present issue. She said that no one wants to look at a cell tower; and that most residents in the area think their cell coverage is fine.

John Rosene: He queried what would happen if the Barrington Countryside Park District withdraws the cell tower application? It was indicated that if the application was withdrawn, the review process will be terminated.

Serg Uccetta: He indicated that he has experienced sporadic cell coverage. He indicated that he has installed a microcell at his home; but that it didn't help him get good cell phone reception. He also pointed out that there is cell reception at some points on his street, but not at others. He stressed that there is a real need for better cell coverage and asked the Board to consider the good of all of the residents when making its decision; and requested that the Village move expeditiously on this matter.

Wendy Fern: She indicated that she drives on Bateman Rd. every day and had no difficulty using her cell phone, so she doesn't think there is any safety issue. She is concerned about the effect of a cell tower on the property values of neighboring properties. Wendy asked the Trustees to follow the ZBA's recommendation regarding the cell tower application.

Dan Jeffernbruch: He noted that in this meeting, it had been mentioned that many of the questions or points brought up were already thoroughly considered during the series of meetings before the Zoning Board. He asked how he could get a copy of that record. The trustees indicated that he can read the complete record at Village Hall; and that some of the documents including a summary are posted to Village's website. He is opposed to new cell towers; since wireless communications will never be perfect. He believes that as the number of cell phone users increases, service will worsen as the system becomes more strained. He stated that when people start using cell phones to watch television, there will be an even greater demand on the systems; which will result in even poorer service, whether or not some cell towers are added in our area.

Alan Free: He lives close to the proposed cell tower cite and doesn't have problems with cell reception. He said that the telecommunications plan for the Village doesn't have any strategy and that no ordinance regarding cell towers exists. He recommended that after an ordinance has been approved, another survey of the residents be taken before approving any towers.

Mike Zachar – He said that he lives within a half-mile of proposed site. By his calculation, he would need a 60 ft tree to block the view of the cell tower from his property. He believes that Cook County has a 125 ft. height limit for cell towers, and wondered why he has to put up with a tower of a height not even accepted in an adjacent county.

Kathy Zachar: Kathy asked what other impacts the cell tower would have on the Village. She was concerned that if the Park District has limited liability and there is some lawsuit, that residents may have to bear the burden of the costs or results of litigation.

Barry LeCompte: He lives across the street from the proposed cell tower site. He reminded the trustees that in a democracy, the opinions of others should be respected. He believes that the Board can only consider the evidence already on the record in making their decision, and so cannot consider the petition just submitted at this meeting. He objects to the cell tower on the grounds of aesthetics and detrimental effects on property value. Moreover, he doesn't believe that a cell tower permit is a proper subject for consideration under a special use permit application. He stated that the zoning code would have to be modified in order for a cell tower permit application to be considered as a special use application.

President Abboud replied that the Village was bound by law to act upon the application within a certain time frame. Trustee Gohl suggested that the residents bring their concerns about the cell tower application to the Barrington-Countryside Park District officials.

President Abboud suggested that due to the rules for the closing of the facility that the meeting was held in, and the fact that residents were still waiting to speak, the meeting should be continued on another date. A suitable date will be arranged and announced to the public. Those who were waiting to speak, but who had not yet been heard, would be given priority to speak at the next meeting.

Trustee Gohl motioned to continue the proceedings to another special meeting. Trustee McKevitt seconded. All present said aye.

Motion Approved

Trustee Gohl motioned to adjourn the special meeting at 10:24 pm. Trustee McKevitt seconded. All present said aye.

Meeting Adjourned

Approved _____

